



NC Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Hearing Loss Awareness Month: Thriving with Hearing Loss Through Self- Advocacy, Communication Access, Technology, and Resources

May 2023

Overview of Hearing Loss



In North Carolina, more than 1.2 million people ages 18 and older have hearing loss.

- 30% of those ages 65 - 74
- 50% of those ages 75 and older



Research indicates untreated hearing loss increases the risk of falls as well as developing dementia.¹



A few health comorbidities with hearing loss include diabetes, cardiovascular disease, kidney disease, and depression.^{2,3}



People over the age of 50 and those with serious health conditions should have regular professional hearing evaluations.



Excessive noise and certain medications can increase the risk of hearing loss⁴



Hearing loss is the leading combat-related disability among military veterans⁵

SOURCES: 1. (The Hidden Risks of Hearing Loss), 2. (Hearing Loss and Associated Comorbidities), 3. (Chronic Kidney Disease and Hearing Loss), 4. (Medications that Contribute to Hearing Loss), 5. (VA research on Hearing Loss)

Thrive with Hearing Loss: Self-Advocacy

A few laws that protect your rights at work, medical appointments, school, public places, etc. are: [Section 1557 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act](#), the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#), and [504 Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#)

Use [communication tips](#) and share with others

Request accommodations

Plan ahead for [events](#) (i.e. call the theater to ask if they have hearing assistive technology available)



Use Hearing Assistive Technology, hearing aids, and/or [assistive listening devices](#)

Ask for clarification when information is not heard

Celebrate successes by providing positive feedback

See also: [Self-Advocacy for Hard of Hearing](#)

Thrive with Hearing Loss Through Communication Access in Healthcare

Telehealth use has increased and patients that are Hard of Hearing often do not have the communication accommodations needed for successful visits.



You have the right to communication access.



Know the types of communication strategies that work best for your needs.



Technology can be used to improve access.

Check out the DSDHH Telehealth [webpage here](#).

Use Technology to Thrive with Hearing Loss

Users often achieve easier communication.⁶

Less likely to report loneliness and depression.^{8,9}

Some experience easier communication in noise.⁶

May reduce sound exposure that might lead to brain atrophy.¹⁰



Hearing rehabilitation helps some users get more benefit from hearing aids.^{6,7}

Early research suggests hearing aids can slow cognitive decline.^{8,9}

SOURCES: 6. (FDA Hearing Aid Benefits and Limitations), 7. (Aural Rehabilitation), 8. (Health benefits of Hearing Aids), 9. (Untreated Hearing Loss Linked to Loneliness and Isolation for Seniors), 10. (Hearing Loss and Cognition: The Role of Hearing Aids, Social Isolation and Depression)

Thrive with Hearing Loss: Mobile Apps

These are several popular apps which are available on Apple or Android devices to provide [captions for mobile phone calls](#).

[Caption Call](#)

[InnoCaption](#)

[CaptionMate](#)



[Hamilton CapTel](#)

[ClearCaptions](#)

[Olelo](#)

NCDHHS does not promote specific companies or apps, but these are a few suggestions that might work for you. It is recommended that you try different apps to see which one meets your needs. Other apps available to assist with your communication can be found here [Mobile Apps](#).

Why Wait?

On average, the time between someone noticing hearing loss and getting help for it is

7 Years ¹¹

Meanwhile,

- **VETERANS** are 30% more likely than nonveterans to have severe hearing loss.¹²
- **THE TOP** service-related injuries are tinnitus and hearing loss.⁵
- **HEARING LOSS** is linked to anxiety, depression and more.⁵
- **LEARN MORE** [ncdhhs.gov/divisions/services-deaf-and-hard-hearing](https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/services-deaf-and-hard-hearing)

SOURCES: 11. (Do You Think You Have Hearing Loss), 12. (Geographic Disparities in US Veterans' Access to Cochlear Implant Care Within the Veterans Health Administration System), 5. (VA Research on Hearing Loss)

NCDHHS, Division of Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing



Hearing Loss Resources

- For additional information & services regarding hearing loss, contact your local [DSDHH Regional Center](#)
- Sign up for [DSDHH events calendar](#) and [The Link newsletter](#)
- [DSDHH Telehealth Guidance and Resources](#)
- Self Advocacy for Hard of Hearing [Resource](#)
- [Veterans Hearing Loss Resources](#)
- For information on programs and agencies that improve community health: [Healthy Aging NC](#)

Check us out on Facebook:



Check out our website:



Works Cited

1. [The Hidden Risks of Hearing Loss](#)
2. [Hearing Loss and Associated Comorbidities: What Do We Know?](#)
3. [Chronic Kidney Disease and Hearing Loss](#)
4. [Medications that Contribute to Hearing Loss](#)
5. [VA Research on Hearing Loss](#)
6. [Hearing Aid Benefits and Limitations](#)
7. [Aural Rehabilitation](#)
8. [Health Benefits of Hearing Aids](#)
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